

# REACHING HIGHER

*Strategic Initiatives for Higher Education in Indiana*

College Completion

Affordability

Preparation

→ **COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE**

Major Research  
Universities

Accountability

## REACHING HIGHER WITH IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF INDIANA

**Focusing on the Role  
of Community Colleges**

June 13, 2008

### **Indiana Commission for Higher Education**

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INDIANA COMMISSION  
for  
HIGHER EDUCATION

To thrive as a state and as individuals, all Hoosiers will need to achieve a depth and breadth of education never seen in the state's history. To meet this objective, the Indiana Commission for

Higher Education developed and adopted *Reaching Higher: Strategic Initiatives for Higher Education in Indiana (2008)* in six key areas: College Completion, Affordability, Preparation, Community College, Major Research Universities and Accountability. These papers support the Commission's *Reaching Higher: Strategic Directions for Indiana (2007)* by outlining specific initiatives and recommendations for action.

## INDIANA'S ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE

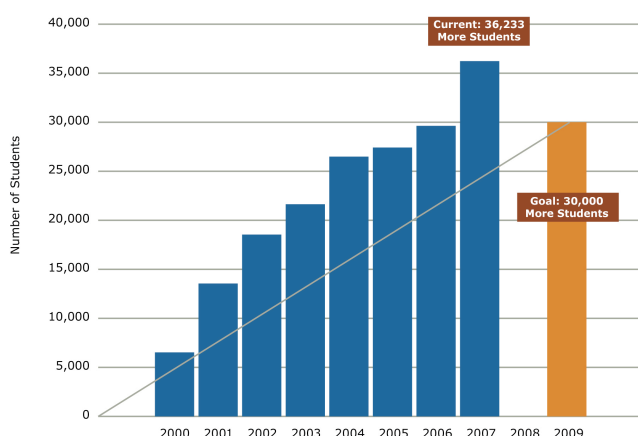
Indiana traditionally has had a lower percentage of adults in its system of higher education. To address this need, the Community College of Indiana was created in 1999, and it has had a dramatic impact on educating more Hoosier citizens. However, we cannot be complacent — as indicated by the Indiana Chamber's recent report, which identified approximately 900,000 educationally underserved adults in Indiana's workforce. Furthermore, Indiana will need to produce approximately 10,000 more degrees (above and beyond the current annual production) to be internationally competitive. Ivy Tech Community College plays a critical role in realizing this goal.

## EDUCATING MORE HOOSIERS

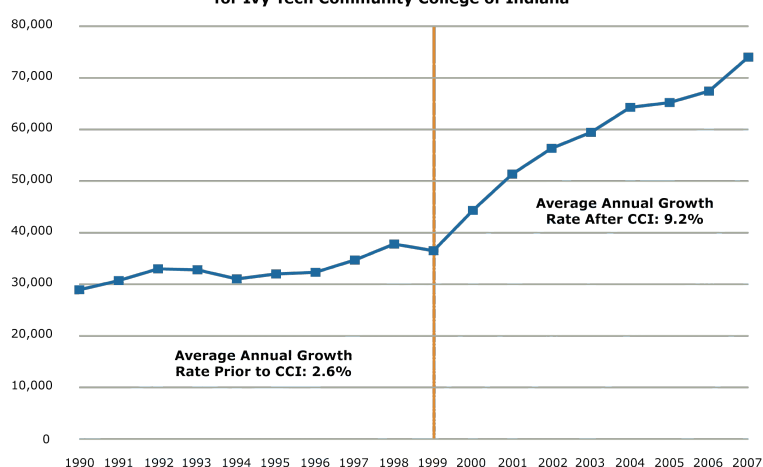
Even with the substantial enrollment increase of 30,000 students, Ivy Tech Community College enrolls only 33 percent of all students in the public sector as compared with approximately 45 percent nationwide. More important, Indiana's adult college participation rate, though improved, still ranks 37th nationally. Ivy Tech's penetration rate is substantially lower than some benchmark community colleges in the country. For example, Ivy Tech would need to double its enrollment to have the same penetration as Maricopa Community College, which serves Phoenix, Arizona.

Ivy Tech's enrollment growth over the past two years is of particular concern. Prior to the 1999 community college kick-off, Ivy Tech had an annual enrollment growth rate of 3 percent. From 2000 to 2007, this average annual rate grew to 8.9 percent.

Progress Toward 10-Year Community College Enrollment Goal



Fall Ten-Day Headcount Enrollment Trend for Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana



Source: ICHE FACTBOOK, Chapter 4.2, Table 12, FY90 through FY98 and CHE Fall Enrollment Surveys FY99 through FY07

The initial kick-off of the 1999 statewide marketing campaign focused on community college branding, the tuition freeze, the ability to transfer courses and aggressive communication efforts. The branding efforts specifically targeted Ivy Tech as a comprehensive community college and not just a vocational training institute — an issue Ivy Tech had struggled with over the years, even after a name change from Indiana Vocational Technical College to Ivy Tech State College. The advent of the Community College of Indiana created something new and different. Along with this aggressive statewide marketing campaign, the image of a new community college with low tuition and the expanded offering of general education courses that transfer to the four-year universities contributed substantially to the enrollment growth. In fact, the growth in the general education courses also produced a rise in enrollments in the technical programs at a time when enrollments in technical programs had been declining nationally. At least part of this tremendous enrollment growth can be attributed to students recognizing Ivy Tech as a college and not just a trade school.

Because the concept of a community college is still relatively new to most Hoosiers, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana has a unique opportunity to further brand itself with the general public. Capitalizing on this opportunity will allow Ivy Tech Community College to develop and present a new image to the public as well as provide innovative and creative ways of delivering education to a variety of student populations — education that can be attuned to Indiana's economic aspirations, thus benefiting students in achieving successful employment in high-demand, high-wage careers.

## DEGREE COMPLETION

As with community colleges across the nation, Ivy Tech Community College shares the challenge of low graduation rates. For full-time students seeking an associate degree, Ivy Tech's two-year graduation rate is 16 percent with a three-year graduation rate of 23 percent. After seven years, the graduation rates for full-time students increase to 33 percent (15 percent for part-time students over a seven-year time period). Though these rates are lower than the national average of 30 percent after three years, the national average should not be the aspiration.

Clearly there are challenges for community colleges. Community colleges have open enrollment and tend to attract and enroll students from the lower 50 percent of the high school class as well as older working adults. At Ivy Tech, approximately 70 percent of incoming students need remediation. Community college students frequently work and raise families while going to school. Additionally, some community college leaders attribute low graduation rates to students attending a community college for specific courses with no intent of completing a degree. Even so, a recent California community college study indicated that only 25 percent of full-time students who stated that they enrolled with the intent of earning a degree actually earned a degree three years later. In any respect, the community college graduation rate has a lot of upside potential.

One strategy could be to deliver program offerings or pathways specifically based on the enrollment status of the student. For example, a College for Working Adults is a model that has been successfully implemented at Indiana Wesleyan University and is now being piloted by Ivy Tech. This pathway is

designed to have shorter course lengths (four weeks in lieu of sixteen weeks) and move cohorts of students toward degree completion at a more deliberate and precise pace. The impact of Indiana Wesleyan University's program is demonstrated in graduation rates of approximately 64 percent, though admittedly, students enrolled in Indiana Wesleyan's program are more affluent and more academically prepared than a typical community college cohort.

A similar model could be considered for full-time students who have completed Indiana's Core 40 high school curriculum. For instance, full-time students could attend six to eight hours per day and earn an associate degree in a nine- to 12-month period rather than the traditional two-year timeframe. A class schedule that meets daily, five days per week, would resemble that of a work schedule or a fifth year of high school, provide more structure, and significantly decrease time-to-degree, especially if combined with a high-quality dual-credit program that allows students to earn college credits while also completing high school requirements. Although students may continue to choose a pathway similar to the traditional approach currently in place, a limited set of recommended plans would provide greater opportunity for degree completion in a timelier way.

Degree completion at Ivy Tech could be improved by further strengthening ties with Indiana's high schools. Ivy Tech is already the state's leader in dual credit, and its role should expand in the future. Making dual credit work requires assessment in high school of students' readiness for college-level work. This assessment could be implemented even earlier in the curriculum — perhaps in middle schools in the 8th grade, or in high schools by 9th or 10th grade. This early assessment will allow students time to bring up their skill levels and will better communicate to students and their parents the skills they will need to succeed in college. Community colleges nationally are engaging local schools in collaborative partnerships such as Early College; New Tech High School; and other comprehensive approaches to improving academic achievement, high school completion and college success. Ivy Tech is involved in such efforts at several campuses; these initiatives should be closely monitored, and successful models should be replicated.

Another strategy could be the implementation of a mathematics course transformation project at Ivy Tech Community College. This project would focus on increasing the number of community college students who complete — and master the content of — high-enrollment, lower-division, introductory math courses. Engaging all full-time faculty in the mathematics department, the project would optimize teaching methods, especially those employing technology, that can be applied consistently in all course sections. To encourage further educational options for students, courses would be drawn from the Core Transfer Library, which would guarantee transferability. The impact of the project could be maximized by including remedial math courses and key high school math courses, and by inviting four-year institutions to participate. Accountability measures would include success in subsequent coursework, especially in higher-sequenced math courses and courses requiring strong math skills, including courses taken at four-year institutions. Although the primary objective of the project would be to enhance effectiveness, some measure of efficiency in the delivery of coursework might also be realized. Employing the services of the National Center for Academic Transformation would significantly facilitate implementation of the project.

## REMEDIATION

Remediation is a problem at community colleges nationally as well as in Indiana. As many as 70 percent of community college students take at least one remedial course in math or English, and this is true also at Ivy Tech. Success rates in remedial programs both nationally and at Ivy Tech are unacceptably low. A study of the California community college system demonstrated that the likelihood of a student attempting a college-level math course after beginning in a remedial-level math course is 10 percent (25 percent for students attempting a college-level English course after beginning a remedial English course). Similar results have been found at Ivy Tech. It is clear that new approaches need to be tried in providing underprepared students with the academic skills they need to succeed in college-level courses. Fortunately, new research, including the Achieving the Dream project sponsored by the Lumina Foundation, is providing more insight into the best practices that improve student success in remedial programs.

In line with the 2001 systematic reduction of remedial course offerings at the public four-year institutions, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) has recommended the elimination of all remedial courses at Indiana's public four-year colleges and universities by 2011. Because tuition at Ivy Tech Community College is less than half the cost of a four-year university, it is a more appropriate place for remedial work. However, there also is a recommendation to dramatically restructure the remedial course offerings at the community college. More than likely, students did not enroll at the community college with aspirations of being placed in remedial coursework — coursework in subjects that they may not be interested in or may have experienced failure with in the past. A traditional approach to delivering such courses apparently was not successful in high school; thus, it should not be of surprise that such approaches do not work in college.

The purpose of remediation at the community college should be to enable students to succeed and go on to degree completion. ICHE recognizes that the best place for a student's remedial needs to be addressed is in high school prior to graduation, and to that end, Ivy Tech is encouraged to work with its local high schools in preparing college-ready students. To the extent that remedial education must occur in college, ICHE recommends that it take place at the community college and that Ivy Tech Community College should continue to develop new and creative approaches to serving students with remedial education needs. Such approaches may include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing an appropriate lower limit for the remedial coursework offered by Ivy Tech, with students needing deeper levels of remediation being referred to the state's adult basic education centers. Ideally the state's adult basic education centers should be colocated with Ivy Tech Community College, and Ivy Tech Community College should act as the point of contact for students requiring adult basic education;
- Offering short four-week refresher courses (in lieu of a sixteen-week course);
- Embedding more of the remedial math and English skills that most students need in the content of the regular college courses;
- Providing self-paced and computer-mediated instruction in the remedial subject matter and/or individual and group tutoring sessions; and
- Providing well-designed academic and student-support services to students requiring additional help in learning how to succeed in college-level work.

## PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Community college tuition continues to rise. Over the past 10 years, it has increased 46 percent from \$1,937 to \$2,819 per year. Indiana's community college tuition is still approximately \$100 to \$450 higher (depending on the measurement) than the national average. Students attending community colleges are generally from lower-income groups, and many of these first-time students decide to attend college late and, as such, miss the March 10 deadline for state financial aid. Because the majority of community college students attend on a part-time basis, they are ineligible for federal Pell Grants unless they enroll in at least six credit hours. Indiana only allocates \$5 million (out of \$200 million) in state financial aid to support part-time students, and this aid is provided on a first-come, first-served basis and is spread across all Indiana's public and independent two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

Additionally, many community college students are older and/or independent students. Unlike younger traditional-aged dependent students, these students no longer receive financial education assistance from their parents, and they may have additional financial challenges with respect to books and supplies, transportation, and in many instances, childcare costs. Of all the higher education sectors, students at the community colleges are most affected by price increases, and cost can be a significant factor in whether or not they will attend college.

Several strategies could be employed to address the cost issue for community college students. For example, the state might institute a "tuition freeze" at the community college for successive years. This strategy would have the net effect of decreasing tuition in real terms by approximately 3.5 percent per year, with a significant reduction over a five- to 10-year period. Unfortunately, due to uncertainty in Indiana's fiscal climate in recent years, legislators have been reluctant to make long-term commitments to tuition freezes. The cost of a tuition freeze would be approximately \$4 million in the first year with an additional compounded \$4 million for each subsequent year.

Another strategy could be to provide more state financial aid to students attending the community college. Such a strategy would need careful consideration given the number of students that would need to be served. If available resources are spread too thin, it is unlikely to have any significant impact. Likewise, if available resources are too concentrated, questions of equity and fairness would be raised. In any event, a request to the General Assembly for financial aid specifically targeting community college students most likely would initiate requests by Indiana's four-year colleges and universities for similar treatment.

Until fairly recently, California offered a free community college education to its residents; today there is a modest cost of \$690 per year. Some states have recently put forth proposals for free community colleges for their residents. In Indiana, the current amount of community college tuition and fees paid, minus state and college financial aid, is approximately \$100 million per year. Though this certainly is a large amount, it is not out of the question that Indiana could afford providing its residents with a free community college education, considering that it is \$100 million less than the recent full-day kindergarten proposal. This initiative would represent approximately 1 percent of Indiana's total annual budget of more than \$10 billion (6 percent of Indiana's higher education budget of \$1.5 billion). If phased in over a 10-year period, the cost

would be \$10 million per year compounded over 10 years. As indicated earlier, whether or not the General Assembly, faced with other fiscal pressures, could sustain this commitment over time is an open question.

In addition to cost, the concept of a less-expensive or free community college addresses another very significant idea. Increasingly business and industry have called for a more-skilled workforce with higher levels of education. There is an overwhelming consensus that people will need at least an associate degree — and preferably a baccalaureate degree — if the nation is to remain competitive internationally. Other countries are rapidly approaching U.S. levels of education, and some are even surpassing them. At one point in the nation's history, it was thought that an 8th grade education was sufficient. Today, a 12th grade education is expected. It may be time to raise the expectations that all people should achieve at least an associate degree and preferably a baccalaureate degree. Currently, approximately one-third of Indiana's workforce meets this objective.

Another strategy has the potential of reducing affordability barriers while at the same time raising education expectations and aspirations of Indiana's recent high school graduates. This strategy could provide recent Hoosier high school graduates the opportunity to receive a free community college education if they successfully complete Core 40, enroll at the community college in the fall semester immediately following graduation, attend college on a full-time basis, apply for state and federal financial aid, and complete a degree within one year. Another option could be to provide funds in the form of a tuition waiver combined with a state work-study grant or internship program.

## TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION

The mobility of students among campuses underscores the need for better transfer arrangements in Indiana. Eighteen percent or 6,903 of the undergraduate degree-seeking students who began studying at an Indiana public campus in fall 1990 transferred within six years to another public Indiana campus before completing a degree at the campus at which they started. National trends suggest that multicampus attendance will grow significantly in our state. The federal government reports that by the 1990s, more than one-half of all undergraduates attended more than one institution. (About one-third attended two institutions, and an astonishing 20 percent attended three or more institutions.)

Shortly following the launch of the Community College of Indiana, ICHE initiated the Transfer Indiana initiative, which included the creation of the Statewide Transfer and Articulation Committee (STAC). STAC has successfully completed work to articulate three Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs offered at community colleges with public four-year institutions on a statewide basis (with nine additional programs to be completed by October 2007). STAC also has developed a Core Transfer Library, which consists of 73 lower-division undergraduate courses that transfer statewide.

Though the transfer environment in Indiana has improved dramatically since 1999, challenges still remain. First, all Indiana's colleges and universities, but particularly Ivy Tech Community College, should maximize the courses that will apply to transfer students' degree objectives and ensure that transfer opportunities are transparent and widely available through the TransferIN system as well as through online



and print copies of course schedules. Additionally, to increase the success of the growing number of transfer students, any student who successfully completes general education core courses at one public campus should be able to transfer these general education core courses to any other public campus in the state. Successful agreements with the Core Transfer Library should serve as the groundwork for pushing transfer even further to include:

- Identifying a core of general education courses that transfers as a block to all public Indiana colleges and universities, and
- Developing statewide articulation agreements that guarantee the transfer of credits from the community college to four-year public institutions in selected programs.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Governor Mitch Daniels' Strategic Skills Initiative was developed to address Indiana's critical job shortages and to increase opportunities and wages for Hoosier workers. As a part of this initiative, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development identified the following key themes in its April 2006 report, *Root Causes of Occupational and Skills Shortages in Indiana*:

- Many in the labor force have insufficient academic preparation for occupations. There is a lack of education in the workforce, especially in the areas of job-specific skills and basic skills.
- A lack of awareness and information about career opportunities, avenues and requirements for some occupations seems to exist.
- For some occupations, there is a lack of available training, qualified faculty and clinical sites.
- The ability of this initiative to address state and federal regulatory issues that govern the qualifications and standards for occupations may be limited.
- Wages and benefits are a factor in determining the supply of workers for an occupation. Wages and benefits can cause workers to change jobs or leave the area.
- New and changing technology will likely be root causes for future shortages. Rapid increases in technology have left workers ill-prepared to move into higher-skilled jobs.
- The current workforce is aging. Up to half the employees in some industries will retire in the next decade.
- Some root causes are more critical than others. Some are more critical in the short term to quickly reduce gaps; some are longer term or not as easily addressed.
- None of the root causes act independently, and none are the pure and sole cause of the shortage. Solving the root problem will not close the skill gap in every case. Secondary causes may remain after the root causes are solved.

The Department of Workforce Development has targeted funds toward solving some of these critical issues on a regional basis with Ivy Tech Community College being a critical partner in these efforts. To continue to address these issues and assist Ivy Tech Community College's focus on the development of the skill base of Indiana's current workforce, the Commission should work with the business community and the Department of Workforce Development and Ivy Tech Community College to identify strategies to address



the current high-demand and future workforce needs of the state. This may include coordinating existing and potential state funding opportunities for training delivered by Ivy Tech Community College and completed on site at a business or industry, as well as providing a financial incentive for Ivy Tech Community College to increase the number of third-party certificates earned and independently certified by business and industry for consideration in the 2009-2011 biennial budget.

## **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

It is critical for the community college system to build relationships in local communities to more fully connect the college directly with community needs and maximize opportunities for leveraging local resources. These partnerships could take the form of shared facilities and programming including, but not exclusive to, local four-year institutions, community organizations and adult basic education centers. Additionally, these partnerships also can be extended to the K-12 sector and involve offering dual-credit courses in the high school or, if possible, on the community college campus.

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Getting the Word Out

Ivy Tech Community College should continue its efforts to **define, brand and publicize** what it, as a **comprehensive community college**, can provide to Indiana's citizens, communities and economy.

### 2. Succeeding with Recent High School Graduates

Though working to attract, retain and graduate recent high school graduates is a shared responsibility across Indiana's colleges and universities, Ivy Tech Community College plays an important role in reaching out to those student populations currently not attending college but capable of succeeding there. As such, Ivy Tech Community College should develop, refine and bring to scale innovative instructional models designed to **sharply increase the number of recent high school graduates** — especially those students capable of succeeding in college but not currently attending or planning to attend — **who immediately continue on to college and graduate** with an associate degree. These innovative models — which should be tested, piloted and evaluated, and which assume that the college would work with students while they're still in high school (e.g., using COMPASS to advise high school students on college readiness, offering dual-credit courses) — might include:

- Sequencing courses (e.g., in a **full-day format**) so students might accelerate earning an associate degree (e.g., in 12 months);
- Organizing students in cohorts and **learning communities**; and
- Providing **intensive counseling** and other student-support services.

### 3. Succeeding with Working Adults

Ivy Tech Community College should develop, refine and bring to scale innovative instructional models designed to **sharply increase the number of working adults who attend college, acquire workforce skills and graduate**. Components of these innovative models might include:

- Learning from and refining the current pilot, **College for Working Adults**;
- **Embedding remedial education** into workforce instruction;
- Guaranteeing a cohort of students that **all courses** needed for their program will be **sequenced and formatted** — including distance education options, as appropriate — so they can **earn their associate degree in two years**; and
- Identifying **benchmarks** at key points along the way — such as earning a third-party certification — that can provide motivation for students continuing.

## 4. Restructuring Remediation for Success

ICHE recognizes that the best place for a student's remedial needs to be addressed is in high school prior to graduation and that nationwide, with few exceptions, success rates in college remedial courses are unacceptably low. To the extent that remedial education must occur in college, Ivy Tech Community College should be the venue for this instruction. Ivy Tech Community College should develop, refine and bring to scale innovative models for remediating academic deficiencies with **high levels of success in the shortest time possible**. Such models might include:

- Providing **short-term** refresher courses and self-paced, **computer-mediated** instruction;
- Establishing a **clearly defined floor**, below which the college will not provide remedial instruction; and
- **Colocating adult basic education** centers on Ivy Tech Community College campuses, where possible.

## 5. Keeping Community College Affordable

The state and Ivy Tech Community College should ensure that the cost of attending a community college campus is as affordable as possible. Consideration should be given to:

- Providing more state financial aid to community college students, including **part-time students**;
- Providing recent Hoosier high school graduates the opportunity to receive a **free community college** education if they successfully **complete Core 40**, **enroll** at the community college in the fall semester immediately following graduation, **attend college** on a **full-time** basis, **apply** for state and federal financial aid, and **complete** a degree within **one year**;
- Implementing more **flexible and transparent financial aid applications** processes (e.g., extending the SSACI application deadline past March 10 of each academic year); and
- Keeping the percentage of family income necessary to pay tuition and fees at Ivy Tech Community College **at or below the national average**.

## 6. Making Transfer More Coherent

Ivy Tech Community College and universities should agree on a **common, core associate degree curriculum** for students to follow in each of the 12 fields for which mandated statewide articulations have already been completed. Such a goal might be achieved by:

- Identifying a core of general education courses that transfer as a block to all public universities and that count toward **meeting** most or all **university general education requirements**, and
- Identifying a core of prerequisite and required courses in the major that would apply toward **meeting degree requirements in that major**.

## 7. Addressing Workforce Priorities

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development and Ivy Tech Community College should coordinate the expansion and delivery of workforce training to meet the current **high-demand and future workforce needs** of business and industry. The state should support this effort by:

- Providing state funding opportunities for training delivered by Ivy Tech Community College and completed **on site** at a business or industry, and
- Providing financial incentives for Ivy Tech Community College to increase the number of **third-party certificates** earned and independently certified by business and industry.

## 8. Building Partnerships through Shared Facilities

Ivy Tech Community College, through its capital requests, should be creative and cost effective in adding new space (e.g., **colocating new facilities** on or adjacent to the campuses of baccalaureate degree-granting institutions and/or community organizations) wherever possible.

## APPENDIX: BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Following World War II, Purdue University and Indiana University expanded regional extension sites throughout Indiana as an alternative to the community college approach that was sweeping the nation at the time. These extension sites predominately offered specific courses and associate degree programs. Over time, these extension sites were brought together to form full regional campuses with expanded degree programs at the baccalaureate level and limited master's degree programs.

In 1963, Ivy Tech was created to provide statewide technical and vocational training and be a low-cost entry point into college for Indiana residents. Ivy Tech started with a very modest state appropriation and was to provide short-term training needs in leased office and warehouse space. As such, the college had very few general education courses and no courses transferred to other Indiana colleges and universities until 1987.

In 1998, Governor Frank O'Bannon asked the Commission for recommendations to improve the competitive quality of Indiana's workforce. A key finding was that Indiana substantially lagged the nation in the percentage of its adult population participating in higher education. A survey of states indicated that those with high adult college participation had strong community college systems. In an effort to broaden statewide community college offerings, Ivy Tech and Vincennes University were asked to partner in developing a community college system. Vincennes University was to contribute its decades of experience with transfer of credit and the expertise it had developed in offering more than 200 general education courses. Ivy Tech was to contribute its statewide geographical distribution and take responsibility for the day-to-day management.

The community college partnership was launched in late 1999 with a tuition freeze, emphasis on transfer of credit and a statewide marketing campaign. Results were immediate with enrollment increasing by 30,000 students in six years — an increase of 78 percent of Ivy Tech's base enrollment. After five years, the partnership between Ivy Tech and Vincennes University fell apart and was dissolved, resulting in a decision to make Ivy Tech Indiana's community college. Legislation was passed in 2005, signed by Governor Mitch Daniels, designating Ivy Tech as the community college and renaming it Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana.